

JOHN BROWN'S INVASION.

HOW OLD BROWN TOOK HARPER'S FERRY.

A BALLAD OF THE TIMES.

(Celebrating the True History of the Great Virginia Fight).

John Brown in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee farmer,

"Brave and godly, with four sons—all stalwart men of might;

There he spoke aloud for Freedom, and the Border-strife grew warmer,

Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence—in the night—

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Came homeward in the morning—to find his house burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle and boldly fought for Freedom;

Shote from border onto border the fierce, invading band;

And he and his brave boys vowed—so might Heaven help and speed 'em!

They would save those grand old prairies from the curse that blights the land;

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Said, "Boys, the Lord will aid us!" and he shoved his ramrod down.

And the Lord did aid these men, and they labored day and even;

Saving Kansas from its peril—and their very lives seemed charmed;

Till the Rufians killed one son, in the blessed light of Heaven—

In cold blood the fellows slew him, as he journeyed all unarmed;

Then Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Shed not a tear, but shut his teeth, and frowned a terrible frown!

Then they seized another brave boy—not amid the heat of battle,

But in peace, behind his plow-share—and they loaded him with chains,

And with pikes, before his horse, even as they goad their cattle,

Drove him, cruelly, for their sport, and at last blew out his brains;

Then Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Raised his right hand up to Heaven, calling Heaven's vengeance down.

And he swore a fearful oath, by the name of the Almighty,

He would hunt this ravening evil that had scathed and torn him so—

He would seize it by the vitals; he would crush it day and night; he

Would so pursue its footsteps—so return it blow for blow—

That Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Should be a name to swear by, in backwoods or in town!

Then his beard became more grizzled, and his wild blue eye grew wilder,

And more sharply curved his hawk's nose, sniffing battle from afar;

And he and the two boys left, though the Kansas strife waxed milder,

Grew more sullen, till was over the bloody Border War,

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Had gone crazy, as they reckoned by his fearful glare and frown.

So he left the plains of Kansas and their bitter woes behind him—

Slipped off into Virginia, where the statesmen all are born—

Mired a farm by Harper's Ferry, and no one knew where to find him,

Or whether he'd turned parson, or was jacketed and shorn;

For Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Mad as he was, knew texts enough to wear a parson's gown.

He bought no plows and harrows, spades and shovels, or such trifles;

But quietly to his rancho there came, by every train, boxes full of pikes and pistols, and his well-beloved Sharp's rifles;

And eighteen other madmen joined their leader there again.

Says Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

"Boys, we have got an army large enough to whip the town!"

"Whip the town, and seize the muskets, free the negroes and then arm them—

Carry the County and the State; aye, and all the potent South;

On their own heads be the slaughter, if their victims rise to harm them—

These Virginians! who believed not, nor would heed the warning word!"

Says Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

"The world shall see a Republic, or my name is not John Brown!"

'T was the sixteenth of October, on the evening of a Sunday—

"This good work," declared the captain, "shall be on a holy night!"

It was on a Sunday evening, and, before the noon of Monday,

With two sons, and Captain Stephens, fifteen privates—black and white—

Captain Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Marched across the bridged Potomac, and knocked the sentinel down;

Took the guarded armory building, and the muskets and the cannon;

Captured all the county majors and the colonels, one by one;

Seared to death each gallant scion of Virginia they ran on,

And before the noon of Monday, I say, the deed was done.

Mad Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

With his eighteen other crazy men went in and took the town.

Very little noise and bluster, little smell of powder, made he;

It was all done in the midnight, like the Emperor's coup d'état;

"Cut the wires: stop the rail-cars: hold the streets and bridges!" said he—

Then declared the new Republic, with himself for guiding star—

This Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown!

And the bold two-thousand citizens ran off and left the town.

Then was riding and railroading and expressing here and thither!

And the MARTINISBURG SHARPSHOOTERS and the CHARLESTOWN VOLUNTEERS,

And the SHEPHERDSTOWN and WINCHESTER MILITIA hastened whither

Old Brown was said to muster his ten thousand grenadiers!

General Brown!

Oswatimie Brown!!

Behind whose rampant banner all the North was pouring down.

But at last, 'tis said, some prisoners escaped from Old Brown's den,

And the effervescent valor of Ye Chivalry broke forth,

When they learned that nineteen madmen had the mad, venous assurance—

Only nineteen—thus to seize the place and drive them frightened forth;

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Found an army come to take him, encamped around the town.

But to storm with all the forces we have mentioned was too risky;

So they hurried off to Richmond for the GOVERNMENT MARINES—

Tore them from their weeping matrons—freed their souls with Bourbon whisky—

Till they battered down Brown's castle with their ladders and machines;

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Received three bayonet stabs, and a cut on his brave old crown.

Tallyho! the old Virginia gentry gather to the bay! In they rush and kill the game, shooting lustily away!

And when'er they slay a rebel, those who come too late for playing,

Not to lose a share of glory, fire their bullets in his clay;

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

Saw his sons fall dead beside him, and between them laid him down.

How the conquerors wore their laurels—how they hastened on the trial—

How Old Brown was placed, half-dying, on the Charleston Court-House floor—

How he spoke his grand oration, in the scorn of all denials—

What the brave old madman told them—these are known the country o'er.

"Hang Old Brown," Oswatimie Brown,

Said the Judge, "and all such rebels!" with his most judicial frown.

But, Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the flag,

Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;

And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the red gore of the dragon,

May spring up avengeful Fury hissing through your slave-worn lands;

And Old Brown, Oswatimie Brown,

May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed his coffin down!

"The hunt was up—woe to the game inclosed within that ferry circle. The town was occupied by a thousand or fifteen hundred men, including volunteer companies from Shepherdstown, Charlestown, Winchester, and elsewhere, but the armed and unorganized multitude largely predominated, giving the affair more the character of a great bonfire than that of a battle. The savage game was bold beyond all possibility of escape." [Virginia Cor. of Harper's Weekly.]

THE TRIALS AT CHARLESTOWN.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

CHARLESTOWN, Va. Wednesday, Nov. 9, 1859.

THE RECORD OF A DAY IN CHARLESTOWN.

The people here are congratulating themselves on the decline of the excitement. Enough, however, lasts to more than satisfy inexperienced visitors, whose lives are not so hotly spiced with warlike variety as those of the sunny Southerners. I call it a fair evidence of excitement to find a town in such an explosive state of feeling that the slightest spark of Northern sentiment sets it off roaring and violent as an ill-regulated volcano. When martial law pervades a community; when two persons can meet without helping one another to loud-sounding expressions of wrath; when business is more than half suspended; when female residents are restrained from venturing beyond their thresholds, so that a bonnet is as rare a curiosity as a phrase without an oath; when armed patrols are constantly on the alert; when Sharp's rifles take the places of walking-sticks; when every stranger is hemmed in by vulgar scrutiny, and forced to undergo continual inspection, or reviled in newspapers, I think the existence of excitement may be acknowledged without much difficulty. Let me endeavor to give a notion of the most prominent public events of a day in Charlestown—those which would strike a newcomer the most forcibly, and which are now far less marked than they were a week ago. It may be interesting to have a plan of the center of the town to refer to at the same time.

"A."

1. Main Street of Charlestown; 2. Cross Street; 3. The Jail; 4. Front Windows; 4. Reception Jail Room; 5. Passage; 6. Brown's Cell; 7. Brown's Cell; 8. Stephens' Bed; 9. Door of Brown's Cell; 10. Window of Brown's Cell; 11. Other Cells and Rooms; 12. Jail-Yard, surrounded by a Wall thirteen or fourteen feet high.

This is an exact and particular, and I can give no further details of the interior of the jail, excepting that the other prisoners are distributed among the rooms above and below, and that great care has been taken to remove every nail and other metallic implement from each cell. The victims, you see, must be carefully preserved for the sacrifice.

Brown's conversation is singularly attractive. His manner is magnetic. It attracts every one who approaches him, and while he talks he reigns. The other prisoners venerate him. Stephens sits in his bed, usually with his face away from the window, and listens all day to "the Captain's" words, seldom offering a syllable except when called upon. Sometimes he gets a little excited, and springs forward to make clear some point about which "the Captain" is in doubt, but his five bullets in head and breast, weigh him down, and he is soon exhausted. As for the other men—Copeland, Green and Coppie, they are always sending messages to "the Captain," assuring him that "it was not they who confessed, and he hasn't growled at them, but at Cook." I cannot forget hearing Brown express himself on the subject of the threatening anonymous letters that have been received by Gov. Wise relating to his case. "Well, gentlemen," he said, "I tell you what I think of them. They come from no friends of mine. I have nothing to do with such friends. Why, gentlemen, of all the things in the world that I despise, anonymous letters are the worst. If I had a little job to do, I would sooner take one-half the men I brought down here, to help me than as many of these fellows as could fill 'all Jefferson County, standing close upon every inch. If I don't get out of this jail before such people as they are take me out, I shan't go very soon."

A WOMAN'S WORD.

I was standing at the railroad depot this morning, amusing myself with the manner in which the soldiers and citizens collect to take note of all arrivals. The train from Winchester came in. A woman lifted one of the car windows, and gazed out with much interest. She was very nearly a beauty, or else the entire seclusion of the feminine part of Charlestown has deprived me of standards for comparison. She certainly did not look at all like an ogress. She very soon began to talk in a loud tone, with the evident intention of being overheard, for her handsome eyes glanced shyly round at every moment, to mark the impression she created. I am going to tell you what this pleasant creature and her companion, her husband, I suppose, said:

"Did you tell me, Paul, that there was another caught?"

"Yes, another was caught yesterday."

"Then there are six now?"

"Yes, six altogether."

"Will they all be hanged together?"

"Probably."

"What, all six?"

"Yes."

"Oh, won't that be gay?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Oh, Paul, may I be here to see? I wish I could wait till it was all done."

(Paul laughs, and looks admiringly on the vivacious speaker.)

"Then, Paul, they'll catch those other villains, Giddings, and all those, and hang them, too, won't they?"

"We hope so."

"Oh, I must be here, Paul, get me some water."

Water, gentle lady, why did you not ask for blood?

comes along with a new idea, to which the recently adopted give way. The debates were more and more bitter, until a lady, a stranger, walks out of her hotel, and approaches the jail. The crowd at once becomes breathless. All eyes fasten upon her. Instinctively the locks of some rifles are examined. There are perfectly audacious mutterings of rage. But the lady passes by the jail, and goes on, and the tension of the Virginia nerve is relaxed once more.

At dinner time there is a peaceful hour. The prisoner is layonneted back to his cell, and the multitude, having seen and approved the operation, give themselves up to appetite. For a brief hour the angry passions vanish. As yet, in Charlestown, cookery supersedes cannibalism. The delicious pies of the hotel singers, standing out in very effective contrast to the numberless discomforts around, soothe all asperities, and overcome all crustiness, but their own. But very soon the drums are heard again. The soldiers come forth, and the people follow. The turbulence of the morning returns. The court-room is replenished, and the streets echo with highly-flavored conversations.

In the middle of the afternoon, it is rumored that a Northern lady, in defiance of the prohibition of the Sheriff, is to be admitted, by favor of Capt. Avis, the jailer, to see Brown. This is a terrible turn of affairs. What can the jailer think of? Col. Romulus and Major Remus are lost in amazement. They resolve to interpose remonstrances, but, as they start upon this errand, they see the lady entering the jail door. It is then too late. The excitement rises to intensity. There is talk of mobbing the jail. A throng gathers. Half an hour passes. The fever grows upon them. An hour. Some measures must be taken. Shall the jail be stormed at once? Ah, here she is. Stop! is it she? Look closely at those features. Make sure it is not Old Brown, disguised in feminine attire. No, all is safe in that direction. But observe the browns, the cold-blooded glares that follow the visitor as she moves away. A man might well quail before them.

The jailer is put through a scorching course of interrogation. Luckily he is a man of firmness and decision, and has the courage to beat down the noisy complaints that assail him. But there are few in Charlestown like Capt. Avis.

At nightfall, the circumsppection is doubled. Free passage through the streets is not yielded. At every turn you meet an ugly fellow, with a still uglier mood (generally a faint-cock, at which the Colonel in command is greatly scandalized, averring that the Government sends all its best arms to the North, and reserves the worst for Virginia), who will neither let you advance nor recede, without a long parley. Later in the evening you cannot go about at all, except within close range of your hotel. There, indeed, you may have the delights of society—a bar-room filled with blatant bores, who, unchecked by the presence of the Judge, who sits among them, rebuke their foolish frenzies, and strive in vain to drown their venom in successive flowing bowls. Thus pass the days and nights in Charlestown.

BROWN AND HIS PLACE OF CONFINEMENT.

As far as a man can be made comfortable in a jail, and under circumstances like his, I believe Brown is so. His jailer is a humane and a just man. He does all for his prisoners that his duty allows him to. I think he has a sincere respect for Brown's undoubted fortitude and fearlessness. He permits Brown and Stephens to occupy the same room, the position of which, as well as the general arrangement of the jail, I give herewith:

"B."

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Water, gentle lady, why did you not ask for blood?

It would have better satisfied your particular thirst, I know.

CURIOSITY OF THE SPOILS.

People may say what they please of the indifference of the negroes to the passing events, but it is not true. They learn with anxiety to learn every particular, but they fear to show it. A hotel servant busied himself the whole morning a day or two ago to extract from me something concerning the prospects of Brown, without appearing to ask a direct question. At last I told him better say what he wanted. "Well," said he, "I said very timidly, 'what do you think they'll do after all, with Mr. Brown?' I told him they would surely hang him. 'Well, now,' he said, 'arguing, 'Don't you see it would be a pity to do anything so 'brutal.' I told him that if Brown were not disposed of, the people in Virginia would think themselves in a bad scrape. 'Pity they wasn't,' said he, 'shuffling away very much discomposed.'

THE TRIBUNE.

I think the people here do not like THE TRIBUNE. Its circulation is forbidden, but it leaks in nevertheless. I saw a man to-day tear a copy with his teeth after reading something that displeased him. I was assured that so incendiary a document did not burn his mouth.

JOHN BROWN'S LETTER TO LYDIA MARIA CHILD.

THE TRUE AID AND COMFORT TO THE DEEMED OLD MAN.

To the Editor of The N. Y. Tribune.

I was much surprised to see my correspondence with Gov. Wise published in your columns. As I have never given any person a copy, I presume you must have obtained it from Virginia. My proposal to a nurse that brave and generous old man, who so willingly gave his life a sacrifice for God's oppressed poor, originated in a very simple and unassuming impulse of kindness. I heard his friends inquiring, "Has he no wife, or sister, that can go to nurse him?" "We are trying to ascertain, for he needs some one."

My niece said she would go, if her health were strong enough to be trusted. I replied, that my age and state of health rendered me a more suitable person to go, and that I would go most gladly. I accordingly wrote to Capt. Brown, and inclosed the letter to Gov. Wise. My intention was to slip away quietly, without having the affair made public. I packed my trunk and collected a quantity of old linen for him, and awaited tidings from Virginia. When Gov. Wise answered, "the imprudence of trying any experiment upon the peace of a society already greatly excited," &c. My husband and I took counsel together, and we both concluded that, as the noble old veteran was said to be recovering from his wounds, and as my presence might create a popular excitement, unfavorable to such chance as the prisoner had for a fair trial, I had better wait until I received a reply from Capt. Brown himself. Fearing to do him more harm than good, by following my impulse, I waited for his own sanction. Meanwhile, his wife said to be a brave-hearted, Roman matron, worthy of such a mate, has gone to him; and I have received the following reply: Respectfully, yours,

L. MARIA CHILD.

Mrs. L. MARIA CHILD.—My Dear Friend (such you prove to be, though a stranger): Your most kind letter has reached me, with the kind offer to come here and take care of me. Allow me to express my gratitude for your great sympathy, and at the same time to propose to you a different course, together with my reasons for wishing it. I should certainly be greatly pleased to become personally acquainted with one so gifted and so kind; but I cannot avoid seeing some objections to it, under present circumstances. First, I am in charge of a most humane gentleman, who, with his family, have rendered me every possible attention I have desired, or that could be of the least advantage; and I am so far recovered from my wounds as no longer to require nursing. Then, again, it would subject you to great personal inconvenience and heavy expense, without doing me any good. Allow me to name to you another channel, through which you may reach me with your sympathies much more effectually. I have at home a wife, and three young daughters, the youngest but little over five years old, the oldest nearly sixteen. I have also two daughters-in-law, whose husbands have both fallen near me here. There is also another widow, Mrs. Thompson, whose husband fell here. Whether she is a mother or not, I cannot say. All these, my wife included, live at North Elba, Essex County, New-York. I have a middle-aged son, who has been, in some degree, a cripple from his childhood, who would have as much as he could well do to earn a living. He was a most dreadful sufferer in Kansas, and lost all he had up to him. He has not enough to clothe himself for the winter comfortably. I have no living son, or son-in-law, who did not suffer terribly in Kansas.

Now, dear friend, would you not as soon contribute fifty cents now, and a like sum yearly, for the relief of those very poor and deeply afflicted persons? To enable them to supply themselves and their children with bread and very plain clothing, and to enable the children to receive a common English education? Will you also devote your own energies to induce others to join you in giving a like amount, or any other amount, to constitute a little fund for the purpose named?

I cannot see how your coming here can do me the least good; and I am quite certain you can do me immense good where you are. I am quite cheerful under all my afflictions and prospects; having, as I humbly trust, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," to rule in my heart. You may make such use of this, as you see fit. God Almighty bless and reward you a thousand fold!

Yours in sincerity and truth, JOHN BROWN.

FROM WASHINGTON.

From Our Own Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9, 1859.

An abortive attempt has been made to get up a sensation over the San Juan affair on the Pacific, but there is not the least danger of trouble, and the parties involved are not disposed to quarrel. England has her hands full just now, in preserving that remarkable *entente cordiale* with France, and our Administration is not particularly belligerent. At least, it has no reputation in that line. Mr. Buchanan is known to be a man of peace, and wears a white choker as a signal of his amiable nature. It is more than forty years since Gen. Cass broke his sword on a memorable occasion, thus discrediting even one of the emblems of war. As these two are supposed to manage the question on our side, we have guarantees of a pacific solution without referring to the conciliatory disposition which was manifested in the surrender of half of Oregon, rather than take the alternative of a collision at arms. Lord Palmerston, of course, must show his chronic grudge, and Lord John Russell could not be content with "putting his foot in it." They have both gratified their peculiarities, and without much advantage. If they will undertake to digest Gen. Cass's broadside of one hundred and twenty-five pages, it will be manifested afterward.

There can be no interruption to our relations, because no cause exists, and the whole territory in dispute is really not worth the foolscap which has been consumed in diplomatic correspondence. If either side should ever say "fight," it will only be because the fact is well ascertained that crowds of bystanders will rush in to hold the un-anxious challenger. It is quite a safe operation, and therefore our Message may venture to be a little topographical. Old Palmerston came into power this last time entirely upon the strength of his alliance with Lord John Russell. Let him look after Johnny Cass, and take up a telescope to spy out the ship-building at Toulon, the vast increase of military equipment and an armament altogether such as the world has never seen before. What does all this mean, my Lord? What is your friend and former Constable, Louis Napoleon, after? There are a thousand San Juans breeding in one of those huge batteries across the Channel, as the world may discover some bright morning, when the roar of their united thunder will reverberate across the Atlantic.

The game to be pursued at Charlestown is fully developed, and understood in political circles. It is simply to reaffirm the Cincinnati platform in terms, adding a plank for the Dred Scott decision. This is the basis of compromise to be adopted between the rival factions of the Democracy, and which will enable both to claim a victory, while asserting their respective doctrines in direct antagonism to each other. It was by this artificial deception which success was obtained in the Senate debate last session, when Mr. Brown of Mississippi declared, in reply to Mr. Douglas, the South should not be "cheated again." Their only mode of re-union is by repeating the fraud. As lightning does not often strike twice on the same spot, it is hardly probable the next experiment will be attended with the same success as the first. Mr. Douglas is ready to crawl back into the regular organization, and to support the Charleston nominee, without any reference to his antecedents.

Depend upon it, Mr. Appleton will not leave the Department of State in a hurry, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding. The country may be deceived, for this is a fixed fact. We have had reports of his intended exodus for two years, and the Republic has been spasmodically excited by an anticipation never yet realized. As to a foreign mission, that will not pay, since the salary remains have been abolished and nothing but the salary of an Assistant Secretary, but there is the expensive currying, the setting up of an establishment, and the dollar-taking of ceteras. So that, while he might have a better cook and drive an unpretending span, the accounts at the end of the year would about balance each other. The President can't spare Mr. Appleton. He takes to him as he does to The Constitution. I must have the President have his Appleton, or so much the worse for him. Then he is wanted in the Department as a wheel-horse to drag the Circumlocution Office along, and there are outside patriots who require his influence at headquarters, and his facilities of "putting things right." So, altogether, we must hold on to Master Appleton, though the country knows he is very anxious to go, and only stays under a sense of patriotic acquiescence.

LITERARY.

—Mr. Charles Reade, the popular novelist, has put forth a manifesto to the press of rather indefinite purport. It seems to express plenty of indignation generally at the critical notices of "It is Never too Late to Mend," and winds up with the startling intimation that Mr. Reade "cannot afford to throw great stones at little birds." He cannot write a book merely to expose one heartless ass and five or six echoes. Able exponents rise in these